

# CoVF UPDATE

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NOVEMBER 2008

*The Council on Virginia's Future has a number of initiatives underway. This update highlights some of these activities involving information and education, recognition and awards, and other related events.*

## Information and Education

Presentations and contacts with key public and private sector audiences about the Council on Virginia's Future, performance management and accountability, and *Virginia Performs* are ongoing.

Highlights of recent contacts include:

- National Governors Association
- Cost Cutting Caucus
- Rural Caucus
- *LEAD* Virginia
- Southern Consortium of University Public Service Officials
- Hampton Roads Partnership
- P-16 Council
- Alabama Training Program
- Delegations from Scotland and Mississippi

## Launch of Council E-Newsletter

The first edition of the Council's e-newsletter was published in July. The newsletter will be published four times a year and will provide news in four areas -- strategic vision / roadmap development, assessment, service performance, and productivity improvement. The Council's second e-newsletter was published in mid-November.

## Business Climate Survey

Virginia continues to be ranked highly by national business organizations and publications in terms of its overall business climate. For instance, in 2008 *Forbes.com* ranked Virginia "The Best State for Business" for the third year in a row. The Council sponsored a 2008 survey of more than 850 business leaders in order to enrich these empirically based rankings with the opinions of business leaders from across the state. Survey research centers at the University of Virginia and Virginia Commonwealth University conducted the survey.

A summary of the survey results is available as *Issue Insight #3* on the Council's website. The following components of the business climate were rated as the most important and only low to medium in performance:

- Workforce Quality
- K-12 Education
- Healthcare
- Transportation

## Issue Insights

A new Council publication, *Issue Insights*, has been developed to highlight current research and thinking on issues of particular interest to Virginia. Three briefs are now available:

- #1 *The High Cost of Low Educational Attainment*
- #2 *Why Students Drop Out*
- #3 *Survey of the Business Climate in Virginia*

## Partnership with the Pew Foundation

Virginia has again received a top score in the Government Performance Project's (GPP) "Grading the States 2008" report, the nation's only comprehensive, independent analysis of how well each state performs in serving the public. In the first such rating in three years, Virginia achieved an overall grade of A- for performance. The GPP report specifically cites Virginia Performs -- a signature initiative of the Council -- as one of the keys to keeping the Commonwealth a leader among states.

Virginia's partnership with the Pew Center on the States, which grew out of that organization's review of Virginia for the GPP, continues to evolve. We have submitted a letter of interest to be what Pew is calling a "Lab State." The proposed Lab States project will provide resources for Virginia to partner with Pew on deploying important enhancements to strategic planning in Virginia's state agencies. The results of this and other Lab State projects will be used as models for other states.

## Other Related Events and Activities

- Agencies recently developed one or more measures of productivity for a key business process and will begin reporting productivity data in early 2009.
- A draft 'Annual Report' has been developed that will replace the existing Executive Progress Report section of the agency strategic plan. The goal is to provide a more accessible, targeted, and strategic view of agency challenges and longer-term opportunities.
- *Virginia Performs* is undergoing a significant redesign to improve the integration of agency performance information across all categories and to make overall site improvements to the look and feel, usability, and data reporting functionality of the system.
- In cooperation with the Hampton Roads Partnership, *Hampton Roads Performs*, a website modeled after *Virginia Performs*, is being developed.
- Work is progressing on assessing and highlighting an area of special emphasis: high school graduation and post-secondary certificates and degrees.

## Summary

The Council on Virginia's Future strives to keep business, government and citizens informed about all of its initiatives -- refining and expanding *Virginia Performs*, focusing on high priority issues, gauging Virginia's business climate, and improving productivity, accountability and service within state agencies.